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FOOD INFORMATION

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Subject: How the Farmer Gets Lumber

Field Distribution: Extension Editors, AAA Committeemen, BAE Analysts, FS, SCS, FSA, FCA, Regional Information Chiefs, War Board Members, OD Marketing Reports Chiefs.

Suggested Use: Background for press and radio releases, talks, other public information.

Will the farmer get enough lumber to meet his most critical needs this fall and winter?

Probably so — if the farmer, the lumber dealer, and the County AAA committeemen pull in harness together. Even so, it may be a tight squeeze.

The Problem

Here is the problem in brief:

We started the war with heavy stocks of lumber on hand, but we have used lumber faster than we had produced it. By the end of 1943, we had reduced our stocks from 17 to 7 billion board feet. The War Production Board says we dare not reduce our stocks further.

Essential uses of lumber require great supplies. We have substituted lumber for metal in many ways, particularly early in the war....War shipping takes much lumber -- for boxes, crates, dunnage and blocking; last year it took half of all the lumber produced... Military and essential industrial construction demand great supplies too.

Government orders aimed at conserving of lumber have greatly reduced but not stopped non-essential use of lumber.

Due to shortages of manpower and equipment, it is impossible to step up production enough to meet all needs.

The alternative is to use lumber only for essential purposes and to balance essential use with production.

The Program

War Production Board has revised Order L-335 to provide over-all control of lumber. It sets up procedures under which: (a) sawmills deliver lumber; (b) distributors receive and deliver lumber; (c) all consumers receive lumber.

In this system farm uses of lumber for repairs and maintenance are rated high on the ladder of essentiality. Only some military uses rank higher.

The War Production Board has allotted to the War Food Administration, for use by farmers in the third quarter of this year, about 11 percent of all the lumber that the mills are expected to turn out during the quarter -- about one-half of the amount normally used in these months before the war.

This lumber allocated to the WFA is for use principally in maintaining and repairing farm equipment and buildings other than dwellings, and for new construction costing less than \$1,000 per calendar year per farm. It may also be used under certain emergency conditions for rebuilding or restoring farm service buildings up to a cost of \$5,000 per farm and a farm dwelling up to a total cost of \$5,000.

In general, however, essential new construction costing more than \$1,000 must be specifically approved by WPB under Order L-41. AAA committees recommend to WPB on L-41 applications but do not have the final decision. Lumber for any new construction approved under L-41 is specially allocated and does not come from the WFA allotment. However, WFA -- through AAA committees -- will issue certificates directly to farmers for virtually all of the lumber available for farm use.

WFA also will assist in keeping the small sawmill operators informed on the program and their responsibilities.

Closely allied with the program controlling the use of lumber are the Forest Service and Extension Service programs for increasing production of wood products.

The WFA allotment for the third quarter will be divided into 48 State quotas-- until July 1 only 42 States had operated on a quota basis, six southeastern States not participating in the program.

State AAA committees may issue county quota but are not required to.

Fence posts, shingles, and millwork such as windows and doors are not included in the quotas and are sold without farmers' certificates.

The Farmer

Here is how the farmer gets his lumber:

1. In most counties -- designated at the discretion of State AAA committee -- the farmer who needs less than 300 board feet goes to the dealer, buys the lumber if it's available, signs an application for the dealer's later use.
2. In all counties -- when the farmer needs more than 300 board feet, he applies to the county AAA committee. If the lumber is to be used in construction (other than farm houses) costing less than \$1,000, the committee may issue a farmer's lumber certificate. The farmer gives the certificate to his dealer -- it is good for 10 days -- and buys his lumber. (He can buy from any dealer, in or out of his home county). In case he cannot immediately obtain the lumber he needs, he may leave the certificate with his dealer, who may use it in placing an order with his supplier. If the construction is to cost between \$1,000 and \$5,000 the AAA committee may issue a farmer's lumber certificate only if the building has been destroyed and must be replaced immediately. Otherwise, the committee will assist in filing an application with WPB under L-41.

3. The farmer needs no certificate (1) when he buys from a sawmill which produces less than 100,000 board feet of lumber a year; (2) when he has logs sawed at a mill producing less than 100,000 board feet a year. Many dealers will have a small inventory of "free" lumber for dwelling maintenance and repairs which may be secured without certificates.

The Dealer

Here is how the dealer operates under the program and how it helps him keep a stock of lumber for farm use:

1. Each farmer's lumber certificate carries a preference rating which the dealer can use in ordering new stock. Most of the certificates carry a rating of AA-3, but some of them -- those issued for especially urgent needs -- will carry a rating of AA-2. These ratings are sufficiently high that dealers should have little trouble re-stocking lumber sold to farmers with farmer's lumber certificates. However, since they undoubtedly have a market for all the lumber they can get, dealers are requested to suggest the use of less critical materials than lumber wherever practicable. If a dealer has little or no lumber in inventory he may apply to WPB on Form WPB-3813 for authorization to order stock.

2. In those counties where farmers can buy small amounts of lumber without getting a farmer's lumber certificate in advance, the dealer should keep a supply of application forms on hand for their use. When a farmer wishes to buy less than 300 board feet of lumber for approved uses the dealer may have the customer sign one of the applications and sell him the lumber immediately. At intervals stipulated by the county AAA committee, or when the dealer has accumulated a number of applications, he may turn them in to the committee and receive in exchange a farmer's lumber certificate made out in his name. Of course, the dealer can expect approval of applications only if the lumber is sold for essential farm uses.

3. The dealer keeps all certificates approved by the AAA committee in his file for two years. In ordering lumber he notifies his supplier how many board feet of lumber are covered by the certificates in his file and the rating of the certificates.

Advantage to Farmer and Dealer

With lumber in short supply and now under strict control, most dealers in rural areas probably will have very little lumber except that available for essential farm use.

It is to the advantage of dealers and farmers alike to make the farm lumber program work.

